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ABSTRACT

Nineteen songs sung at potlach activities to honor the dead have been transcribed and compiled to foster greater understanding and appreciation among Alaskan school children of the place of songs in the life of the Central Koyukon Athabaskans who believe that singing and dancing allow emotional release from the sadness of losing a loved one. The songs, never directly naming the deceased person, tell of how much the person is missed by his family and friends and of the good deeds the person did when he was alive. The songs fall into three basic types: (1) the mask dance songs, sung with the typical Eskimo words accompanied by the beating of the hand drum; (2) the washtub songs, to which the people dance around a peeled spruce pole moving a piece of calico up and down with their hands; and (3) the stick dance songs, sung only during the proper time at the Feast for the Dead. Each song is presented with lyrics in Athabaskan and English, a brief history of the subject of the song and its composer, and appropriate illustrations by Dinah Stephenson. Also included is a biographical sketch of Madeline Solomon, native Alaskan educator who assisted in compiling the songs. (NEC)

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KOYUKON ATHABASKAN

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DANCE SONGS

Koyukon Athabaskan Dance Songs

Developed by the Staff of the
National Bilingual Materials Development Center
Rural Education Affairs
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Anchorage, Alaska 99503
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As a Joint Project with the
Alaska State Department of Education

Illustrated by
Dinah Stephenson

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MADELINE SOLOMON
KALOHUŁTOONH

Madeline Solomon was born in 1905 up the Kateel River. The real name of this river in the Indian language is Kodeelkaakk'at which means the mouth of that river, Kodeel. She was born in one of the tents where the people lived in that old village.

At the age of six months, Madeline was adopted by Mr. and Mrs. William Filka of Nulato. She grew up mainly with the Kriska family because they had little kids with whom she could play. Mrs. Kriska was also Madeline's mother's sister.

Madeline started to attend school in Nulato. Most of the time, however, she was out having fun camping during trapping time. Later on, she attended school regularly at the boarding school in Holy Cross for four years.

At sixteen years of age, Madeline married John Dayton Sr. of Koyukuk. She went with her husband to make her home in Koyukuk. No one really resided in Koyukuk then. The people moved around following the game animals. In this way, Madeline got to see a lot of the countryside. She even went

as far as Selawik one Christmas because in one of the places where they stopped to camp, some Eskimos were there, too. These Eskimos invited them to come to Selawik with them for Christmas. Mr. Dayton passed away in 1943 and Madeline married Mr. Herbert Solomon.

Madeline had twelve children, but she lost six of them when they were quite small. She then adopted four girls. Two of the girls are married, one is attending the University of Alska majoring in bilingual education, and the other is attending high school in Galena. Madeline also adopted two of her own grandchildren.

In 1942, Madeline started to work for a wage. She became a part-time store keeper for Dominic Vernetti, an Italian who operated a store in Koyukuk. Mr. Vernetti often took goods on his boat in the summer time and traded them for fish along the Yukon River. Madeline went along to sell and keep records of the sales as well as to interpret for the customers. Sometimes she operated the store in Koyukuk but she worked only when she felt like earning some money. Madeline earned five dollars a day for her work.

Even though Madeline did not make lots of money at her job, she had other benefits. One of these was the opportunity to learn to read and write better in English from Mrs. Vernetti. Mrs. Ella Blair Vernetti was the postmistress, and she had a good education.

Later, Madeline worked as a Headstart teacher for two years in Koyukuk. Then she became the cook for the school for two years. Finally, she started to work in bilingual education and was the first bilingual teacher in Koyukuk.

Currently, Madeline is teaching bilingual education classes in Galena. All the students from Headstart through the twelth grade participate in the bilingual education classes. The students learn to speak Central Koyukon as a second language. They also have cultural arts and crafts activities such as tanning skins, beading, basket weaving, singing and dancing.

Madeline Solomon truly enjoys working with the children in bilingual education. She feels that it is very important for the children to learn about their ancestors. She says that the children usually beg to hear about the life style of their ancestors and she feels that it is good and proper for them to know it. This is especially true of the ways they hunted and fished. The children ought to be able to make comparisons between the old and the new, thereby being motivated to work hard, to become "wealthy" and be "well to do." That means, in the Indian way, they should work very hard to make a living from the land. They should work very hard to have enough food, enough home-made clothing, and enough firewood. It does not mean having lots of money. It also means being generous people who share with those that are in need.

INTRODUCTION TO THE SONGS

Madeline Solomon of Koyukuk has assisted in compiling the songs in this collection with the hope that they will be used by the school children of the state and by the Central Koyukon people in particular. She feels that it is very important for the children and the adults to know how to sing the right words to the songs and to gain a better understanding of why the songs were composed.

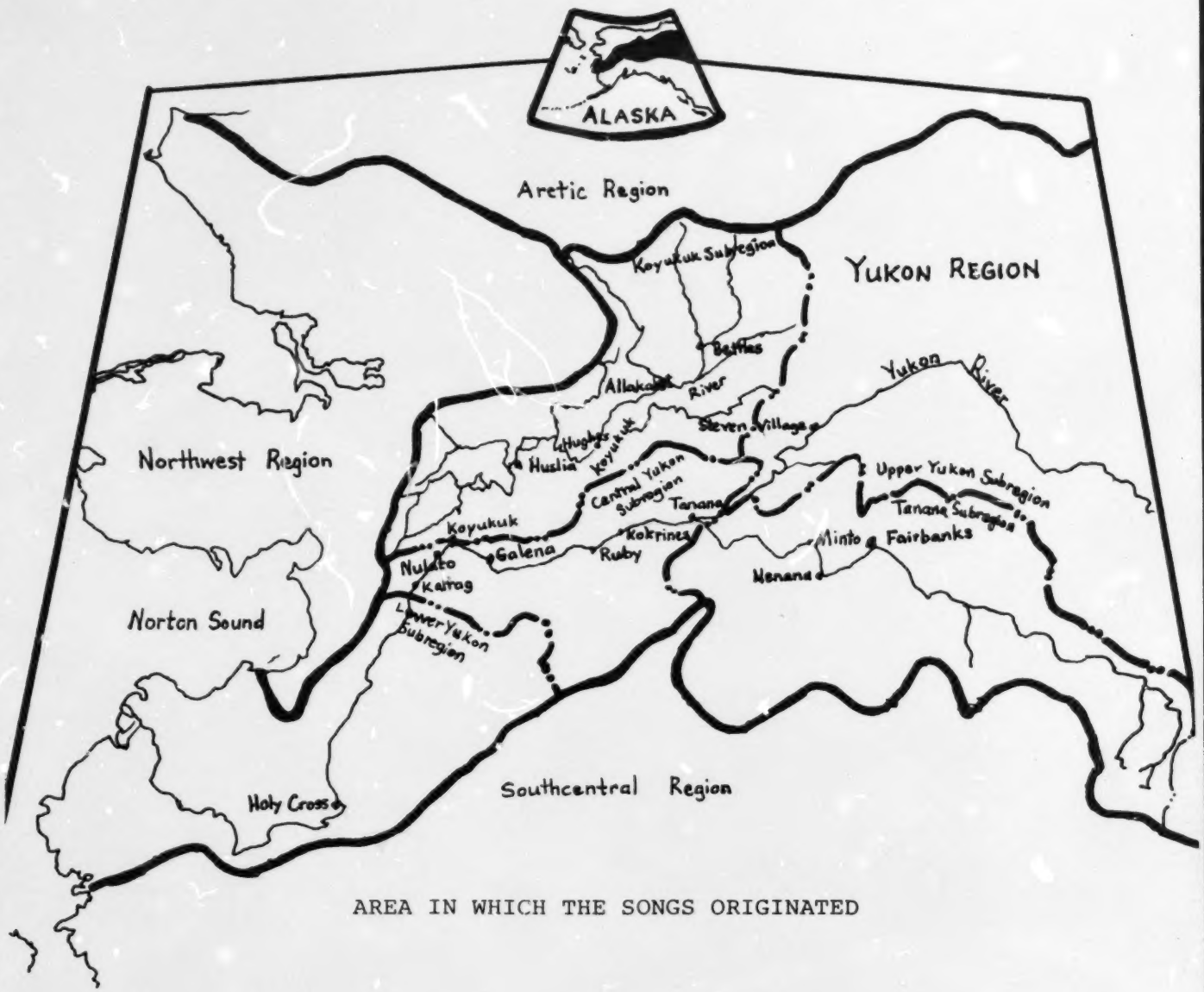
There are three basic types of songs sung at the potlatches. They are the washtub songs, the stick dance songs, and the mask dance songs. Songs and dances go together at the potlatches, where new songs are learned for the first time, and the old ones are remembered.

The washtub songs and the mask dance songs can be sung at times other than at the Feast for the Dead, but the stick dance songs can only be sung during the proper time at the potlatch. To sing them at other times would be to invite bad luck according to Indian belief.

There are thirteen songs for the stick dance which were composed by an orphan boy many years ago. The mask dance songs are sung with the typical Eskimo words accompanied by the usual beating of the hand drum. The washtub songs are not sung with a drum. Perhaps the name washtub was given because of the action accompanying the song beats when the people dance around the peeled spruce pole, holding on to a bolt of calico. As their hands move up and down, they seem to be doing a wash with the material.

Any one can make a song about the dead. These songs tell of how much the dead person is missed by his family and his friends. They also tell of all the good deeds the person did when he was alive, and that he will be missed because of those deeds. The songs never name the deceased person directly. The songs are really poetry and must be interpreted before the meaning is fully understood.

Skills at song making are greatly admired by the Central



AREA IN WHICH THE SONGS ORIGINATED

Koyukon people. The song makers are "thanked" publicly during the Feast for the Dead just like the pallbearers and others who have aided in any way with the funeral. They may be given gifts consisting of handmade clothing items or blankets. These gifts mean more to them than a payment of money for their songs.

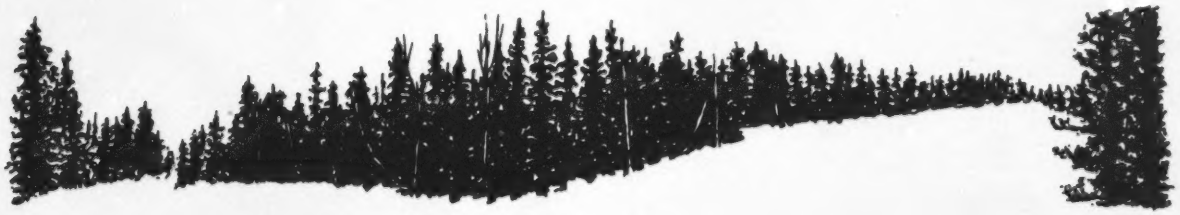
Singing and dancing at the potlatch activities allow the people to be emotionally released from the sadness of losing a loved one. It also allows the people to be reunited with relatives and friends from other places up and down the Yukon

at a happier time to continue living life again. As Madeline puts it, "After we sing and dance, we forget about our sorrow. We are happy again for we have sent the dead person to his rest; we have repaid our debts to the people who aided us in our time of great troubles and especially the ones whom we dressed because they were just like the deceased ones to us, and we have taken precaution to get a portion of our luck back. In that way, we begin to live again."

Dr. Thomas F. Johnston, an ethnomusicologist at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks, greatly assisted in the compilation of these songs by transcribing the music. Eliza Jones, an instructor of the Athabaskan language at the University of Alaska, helped to transcribe the song syllables. Without their assistance, this work could not have been produced. We greatly appreciate their help and encouragement in getting these songs together.

We hope that whoever uses this song book will get as much enjoyment out of using it as we did in compiling it. For teachers, the Teachers' Suggested Activities for using this song book plus the recorded tape of Madeline's singing should be very helpful in teaching and learning the songs. Hopefully this work will bring the user to a greater understanding and appreciation of the place of songs in the life of the Central Koyukon Athabaskans.

The Staff, National Bilingual Materials Development Center



Big Louie lived in Koyukuk. He was probably called Big Louie because not only did he have a younger brother named Louie, but he was tall and big in size. He composed many songs. Infact, he was considered one of the best composers

not only of songs, but speeches, too.

In his day, the people from Minto, Nenana, Cross Jacket, Stevens Village, Rampart, and other villages along the Yukon used to gather at Kokrines for potlatches. Before the other villages arrived, the people from Koyukuk would get to Kokrines first and await the visitors. As the people from up-river landed, they tied all their boats together and started to sing and dance at the same time they were landing. A speech contest would be held, and those destined to compete would be the first ones to alight. They were all dressed up in mooseskin jackets beautifully decorated with beads and wearing their highly priced dentalia. Everyone would follow them up the hill to the place where they would hold the dancing. This was usually held in the springtime outdoors. It lasted about one week.

As the people gather at the dancing place one of the two speakers would start to make his speech. Everyone would listen but only a few of the older people and the other competitor were able to discern the meaning of the speeches for these were highly symbolic in content. The contest between the speakers, very much like a debate, would proceed until one of them did not have any more to say about the opponent's speech. Then the other was considered the winner. Big Louie won these speech contests many times. There were no prizes given except the recognition by all present that he was probably the smartest man with Indian words among them.

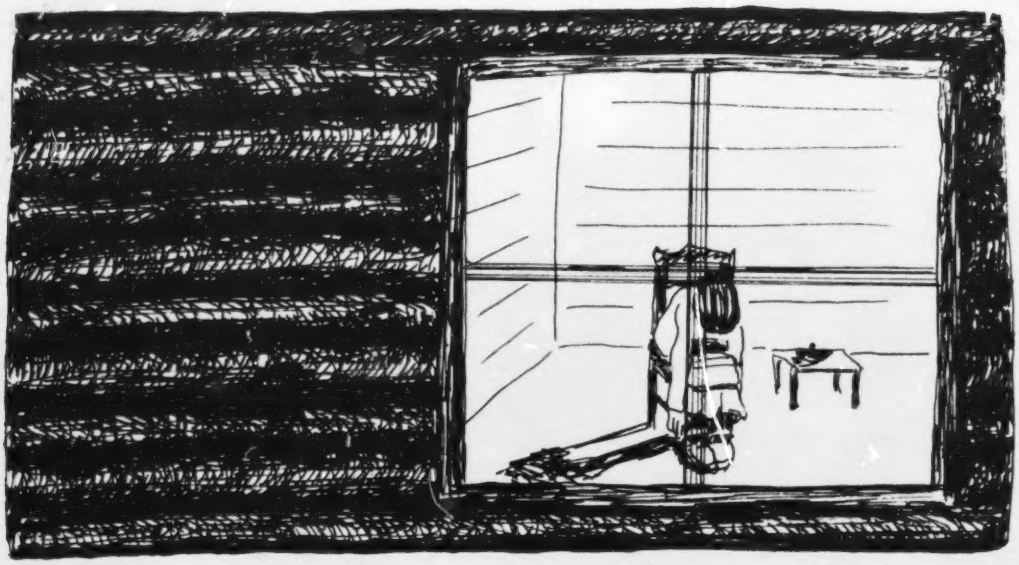
Big Louie composed this song about James Demoski around 1923. James Demoski was from Nulato. He was drowned while being out in his canoe checking his fish wheel. Big Louie spoke of James' origin and his marriage to a well-to-do family in Nulato.

A rich family in the old Indian way did not have anything to do with money. It referred to hard working people who had lots of food, homemade clothing and lots of firewood. It referred to people who were not lazy to do hard work. Big Louie wondered why the river took James as he was an essential part of the community.

ATHABASKAN INDIAN DANCE SONG FROM KOYUKUK

Sung my Madeline Solomon, fall, 1977.
Song-class: k'idzis k'ileek (dance song)
M.M. ♩ =108 Transposition: nil

si- ki- tl'a ha ha ho-dee needzi k'ahaa- taa- ya' ts'inh
MY YOUNGER BROTHER HE WAS FROM A WELL-TO-DO FAMILY
ts'aa-kkus-kkaat daanee-lo- na ha a-kinh-gha-di- nee-tonh
IT WAS AS IF THEY LEANED ON THE RICHES
kk'a di-nee-t'aa na do- o- yił- aanh- na
WHY DID HE (WATER) TAKE HIM?
do- o yił- aanh na ha ha- a ha do- o- yił-aanh
WHY DID HE (WATER) TAKE HIM? WHY DID HE (WATER) TAKE HIM?
end
na ha si- ki- tł'a ha ha ha si- kitł'a ha ha
MY YOUNGER BROTHER
ho-dee baa-haa neeł kk'aa do-kinh-k'a ghaa li-dlo
REMEMBER, PEOPLE DEPENDED ON THEM (HIS FAMILY) AS A HOUSE NEEDS CORNER-POSTS



Toby Patsy, an excellent trapper from Koyukuk, composed this song about Mrs. Chief Esmailka (Christine, the wife of Gregory Esmailka of Nulato) about 1945. Toby moved to Nulato in 1921 when he was about thirty-two years old. He lived in Nulato until his death from drowning in 1963. He was married twice and had three or four children who have also passed away.

Toby loved to compose songs. He composed many songs about different people in his area. The song in this book is the current version of Toby's original song.

In Toby's original song, he did not speak of Mrs. Esmailka's death as being caused by drinking alcohol. The people forgot the original words when they were singing the song at one of the potlatches. At that same time, one of the women came staggering in and started singing about the high price of alcoholic drink. Everyone kept on singing the same words with the tune of Toby's song from that time on and that is how the song has come down to us.

Mrs. Eskailka died from a heart attack while trying to keep a vigil on her son who was very ill. Toby would not have made a song about alcohol concerning Mrs. Esmailka. That would have been disrespectful.

ATHABASKAN INDIAN DANCE SONG FROM KOYUKUK

Sung by Madeline Solomon, fall, 1977.
Song-class: k'idzis k'ileek (dance song)
M.M. ♩ =124 Transposition: min 6th up

Ee- naa hee a ho- o ee- na- ee
My mother
Where is mother?
hee hee hee hee ee- naa hee a
My mother
ho- o ee- naa- ee hee hee hee hee hee
(2nd time) U.
Where is mother?
hee ho yee hee ho ho- o ee naa- ee
D. L. high priced stuff ho- o ee naa- ee
hee hee hee hee yee hee ho yee hee ho
hee hee hee hee U. D. L. high priced stuff
ho- o ee naa- ee
ho- o ee naa- ee
Where is mother?

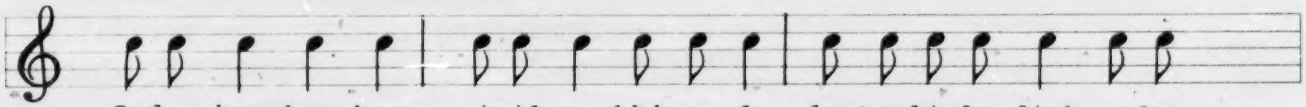
11

Charlie Mountain lived in Nulato. He was in his late forties when he composed this song about his female cousin in 1918. His cousin died in Kaltag.

This song expressed how Charlie felt about losing his cousin. He also spoke of his frustration when he went to try to see his cousin and the doctor in attendance did not allow him to do so. Charlie spoke of his expectation for his cousin to have followed in the examples of their grandmothers, to become a good seamstress.

Charlie lived well into his eighties before he passed away. During his lifetime, he and his wife, Mary Mountain, composed many lovely songs which were popular at the potlatches.

Sung by Madeline Solomon, fall, 1977.
Song-class: k'idzis k'ileek (dance song)
M.M. ♩ =118 Transposition: nil



Sodaa hee hee hee siyił-na kk'ano-do deetaalislo dinh sodaa
To my older sister my relatives. I'm putting songs on you. My older sister

hee hee ya ha yoonaanee hut'aana baghu a-no-naa-li-si-yo
the "outside" people blocked my way to her
koo-nee-e hee o ho ho ho ho ho sodaa hee hee-e hee hee hee
also
my older sister
o ho ho ho ho ho so- daa hee hee so-daa hee hee hee
my older sister
my older sister
so-daa hee hee hee hodee dodo bitsoo yoo hoghoneeł kk'aa neelo-dza-nee-
my older sister
Down here her grandparents were good seamstresses
daakk di- i- inh k'iti-lo-o' di-naa-lis-lo kk'a di- tłinh-na
I thought of her being a seamstress like her grandmas
sodaa ha hee ya ha o ho ho ho ho ho sodaa ha hee ya ha
My older sister
My older sister
hee ha o ho ho ho ho ho so- daa hee
My older sister

ATHABASKAN INDIAN DANCE SONG FROM NULATO

13

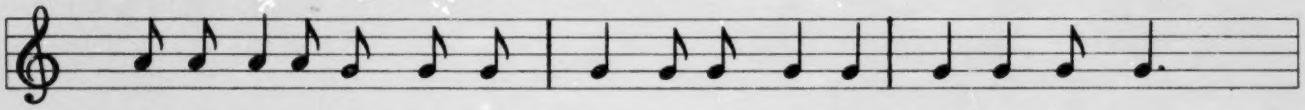
Madeline Solomon was born in 1905. She has lived in Nulato, Koyukuk and presently is residing in Galena where she teaches the bilingual education classes. She composed this song in 1974 in honor or Mrs. George Semaken and Pauline Pitka, both of Kaltag.

The ladies passed away at approximately the same time. Madeline speaks of how much these ladies would be missed by everyone who depended on them whenever anything was in short supply. The ladies used to travel to Unalakleet quite frequently. In Unalakleet they would trade for reindeer skins, seal skins, oogruk bottoms for mukluk boots, reindeer leggings for boots, whale blubber or muktuk, seal oil, and other supplies including white seal skins. The items they used for trading were mostly wolverine and beaver skins. Some beadwork on mooseskin for use on mittens and slippers were also traded for the coastal goods.

These ladies were also very good dancers. Mrs. George Semaken used to dance for fourteen to sixteen hours continuously at the stick dances. She never missed a dance. Pauline used to dance using Eskimo dance motions. They were really superb performers. Everyone missed them greatly.

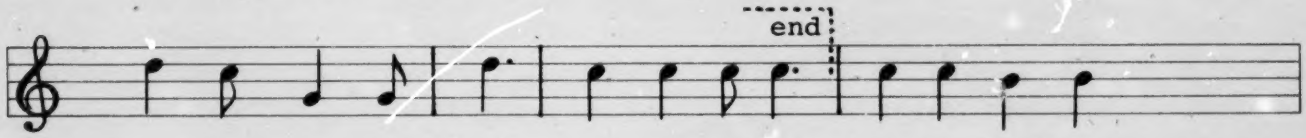
ATHABASKAN INDIAN DANCE SONG FROM KOYUKUK

Sung by Madeline Solomon, fall, 1977.
Song-class: k'idzis k'ileek (dance song)
M.M. ♩ =116 Transposition: maj 6th up

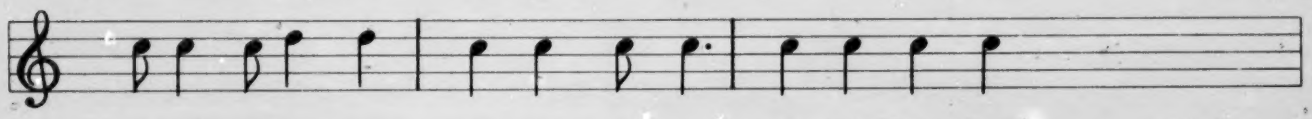


Ee-naa a ho-dee bakk'aa- yee hoolaa o-nee ghu bit'-oh-tłee
Mother, as you know. For those things we are short of

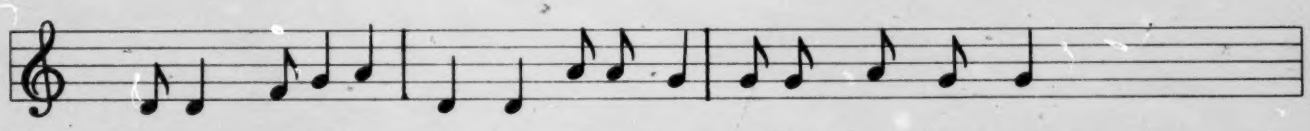
k'idli-yo kk'a daghee t'aa' na hee ee hee hee
we depend on them



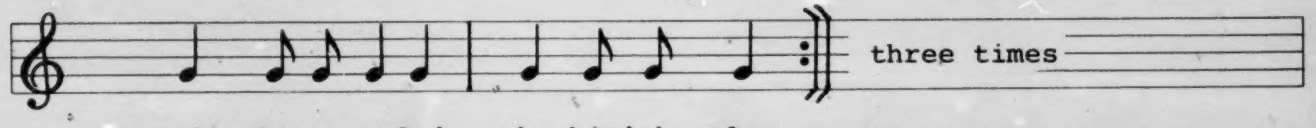
ee yee ha hee ee hee hee eenaa ee hee yoo hee
mothers



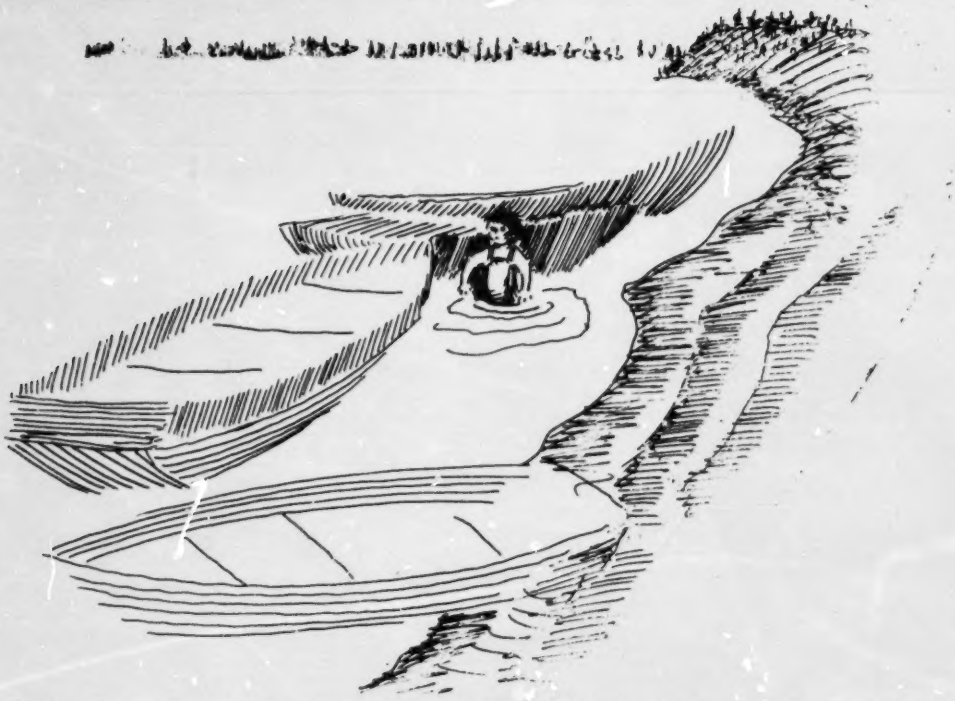
anaa eena- ee- yoo-hee naa-ee hee hee hee hee
oh dear mothers mother



anaa eena a yoo hee eena a hodee neełk'o ts'i
oh dear mothers mother as you know, we miss



ts'i husoo-a-la' ghu bit'oh tłee
all their different dances

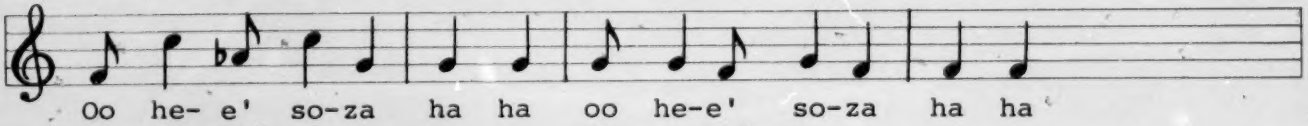


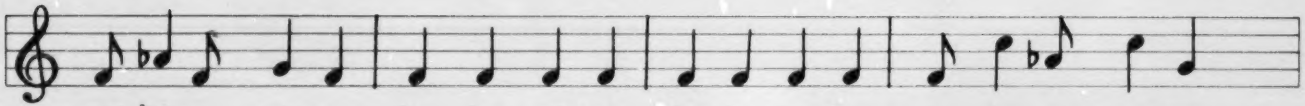
John Dayton composed this song about his nephew, Morris Pitka, in 1923. Morris Pitka was drowned when he was about three or four years old. His mother put Morris to sleep while she worked on tanning a moose hide. When she checked on him, he was gone. Later on, his body was found by one of the boats in the river.

The song expressed John's feelings of sadness over his nephew's death. He spoke of his longing to share his knowledge with his nephew as this would have been part of his familial obligations to teach the young boy in the ways of his people. He lamented the fact that his expectation of his nephew becoming like his ancestors before him was no longer possible.

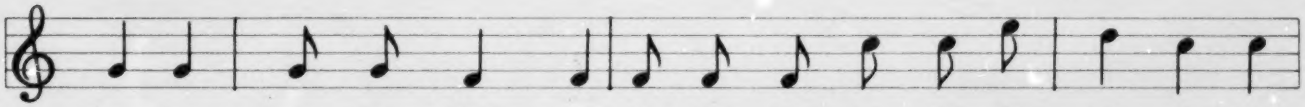
John Dayton lived in Koyukuk. He was born in 1890 and died in 1943.

Sung by Madeline Solomon, fall, 1977.
Song-class: k'idzis k'ileek (dance song)
M.M. ♩ =106 Transposition: min 3rd up

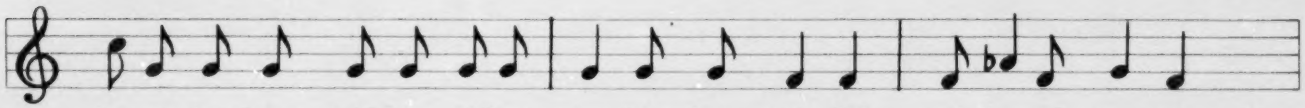




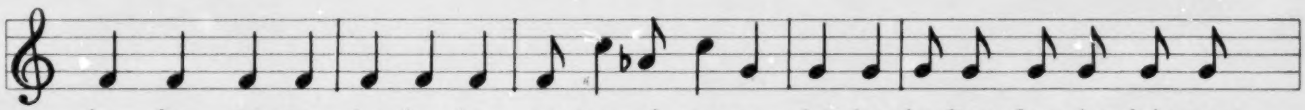
oo he-e so-za ha ha so-za ha ha ha ha oo he-e so-za
Oh my nephew My nephew Oh my nephew



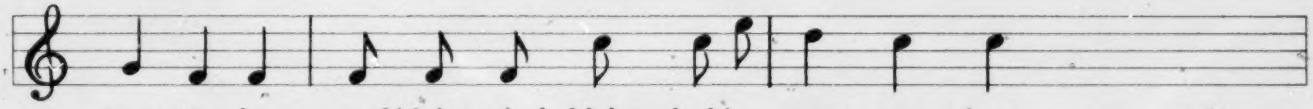
ha ha nee- daa- dinh he nó- do- dee- ta gha gi- ki- li- inh
when will we get to share words again? This person



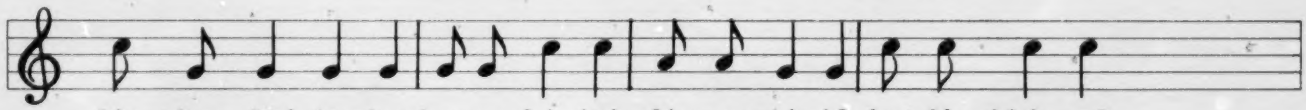
deego baahaa tillee okko do-dis-lee ni-inh oo he-e' so-za
I am singing sadly for Oh my nephew



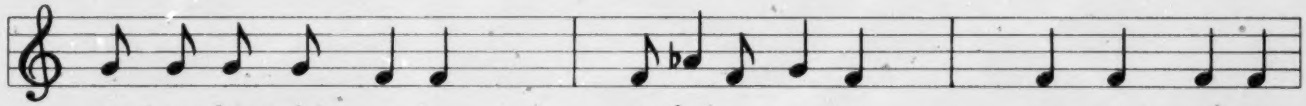
ha ha so-za ha ha ha oo he-e' so-za ha ha hodee doogha bitsee-
My nephew Oh my nephew As you know around here



yee-yoo hu neełkk'a nin' kk'a hakko no- nee hee
his grandfathers they used to catch animals in all directions



dee-ghee lo' hu ho ho-no bi-inh di-naa yi-ił ha-d'a kk'a-ał
everywhere They expected him



ee-taa-li-tonh- na ha oo he-e so-za oo ha' so-za
to follow in their footsteps Oh my nephew

ATHABASKAN INDIAN DANCE SONG FROM KOYUKUK

17

Andrew Paul was the son of well-to-do people of Koyukuk. He was among the first dog mushers to enter the dog team races. He raised very good dogs. He lived all his life in Koyukuk until his death about 1939.

This song composed by Andrew about his mother-in-law, Mrs. Tom Dayton, was the first of his compositions. He made this song in 1922. In the song he spoke of Mrs. Dayton's ancestors' work. He told of how Mrs. Dayton was the only one left out of that family likening her to a "light of her grandmother's flame." He told of how Mrs. Dayton used to work hard preparing all the necessary things for the potlatches. Now he lamented her loss and likened all the living to "orphans" because Mrs. Dayton had passed away.

ATHABASKAN INDIAN DANCE SONG FROM AROUND NULATO

Sung by Madeline Solomon, fall, 1977
Song class: k'idzis k'ileek (dance song)
M.M. ♩ =107 Transposition: maj 2nd down

Ee- naa a ha ha ho-dee do-nee- ggu bit-soo-yoo
Mother As you know, up-river, her grandmothers
hut'inh ts'aakuskkaat daanee- lo di-inh huts'inh ts'aayakkoyh ghanee-
used to bring out all hte potlatch food She who is the light
yo kk'a baahaa do-hu-daala onh di- inh ee- naa-a
of her grandmother's flame mother
ee-naa-a ee-naa-a ee-naa- a- a ee-naa
mother mother mother mother
a ha ee-naa a ha ha ha ee-naa a ha ha-a ho-hał
mother mother
doo' neeno-do- hu-dee-to-di lił ts'i hoo-lo-onh tu-uh
The potlatch arrangements are to be made
a-dinh yakk'o- do-daa-li- nee-yee yuhtaaneets a-nee- no-
She is in charge of the main part of it
gho-li-noł tu-uh haa-dinh tłeetiko di-naa- naa nee-
At that time she left us without her leadership, like orphans
lo-o koo-nee ha ee-naa-a ee-naa- ee-naa-a
mother mother
ee-naa- a- a ee- naa ee nee ee- naa

19

Young Toby of Koyukuk composed the song for his cousin, Alfred Dahlquist, in 1943. Alfred died of a heart attack at Nulato.

Young Toby heard of Alfred's death via radio as it was his custom at that time to listen to the radio news about the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the number of people being drafted for military service, and the talk of people going "outside" of Alaska to join the war efforts. In this song, Toby likened himself to those who had left the state going to war. He felt very far away from Nulato and even though he was only at camp about seventy miles up the Koyukuk river, he might as well be out of Alaska. The news came to him as a shock.

ATHABASKAN INDIAN DANCE SONG FROM KOYUKUK

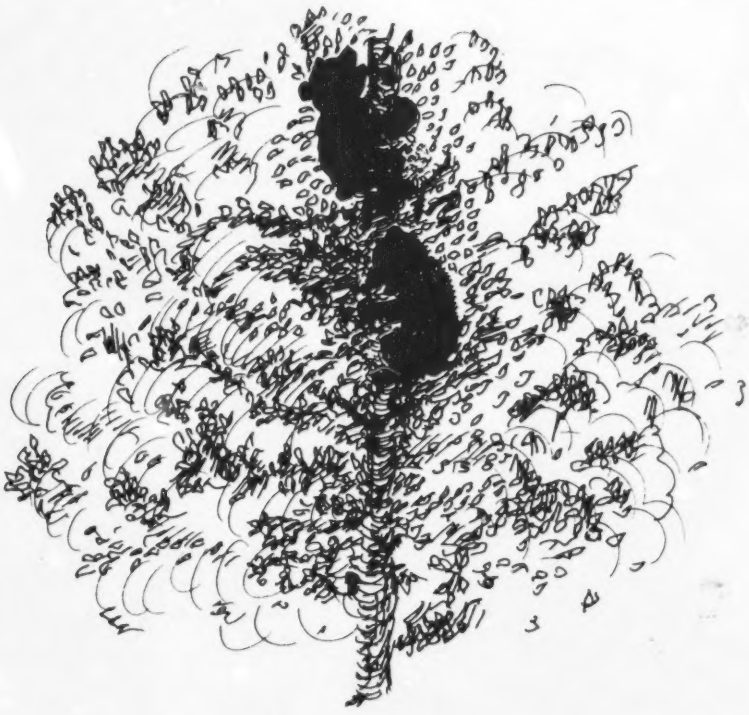
Sung by Madeline Solomon, fall, 1977.
Song-class: k'idzis k'ileek (dance song)
M.M. ♩ =120 Transposition: min 6th up

Ee yoonaa- na no-daa- ni- sli-it lo-o- onh ee yoo-naa-na no- daa-
I went outside (of Alaska), it seems
ni- sli-it lo- o- onh ee good- bye my sonny hee'
Goodbye my sonny
hee o- ho nee- ya ha ha o hee' o- ho hee- ya hee- ha
end
o hee' o- ho hee- ya hee-ee

Sing song to end. With repeat, the meaningful words are dropped and only the eh he ah ho he yaa is sung all the way to the end. Then sing the meaningful words again the next time.

21

ATHABASKAN INDIAN "SPRINGTIME" SONG FROM KOYUKUK



Old Toby, the father of Young Toby, composed many songs. The tune for this song about his mother was inspired by listening to two bear cubs in the spring of 1902. Toby was out hunting when he came upon two cubs stranded on top of a cottonwood tree. The ground was flooded and the mother bear was not anywhere to be found. He heard the cubs crying as if they were calling "mother, mother." After returning from his hunting, he heard his cousin, Tom Dayton, playing on the accordian, and that inspired him to compose the song combining the sounds the bear cubs were making and the tune that Tom was playing on the accordian.

In this song, Toby recalled how his mother fed him even in cold weather. He recalled how she went out to pick berries, and how she found a bear one time and came to tell the men about it and they went out to kill it. The bear cubs' moanful, helpless cry for their mother reminded Toby of his mother's death. The sad feeling expressed itself in this song.

Toby was from Koyukuk. He passed away around 1940.

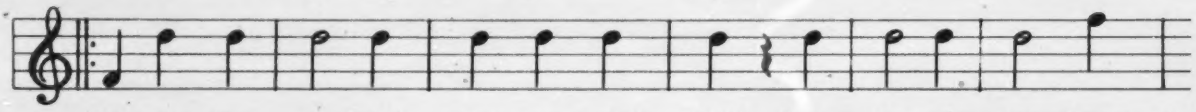
Sung by Madeline Solomon, fall, 1977.
Song-class: too k'ileek (springtime song)
M.M. ♩ =121 Transposition: min 6th up

Naa- ee o naa- ee naa- ee o naa- ee ho naa- ee naa-a hee -a hee yoo haa
Mother O mother Mother O mother Mother
ya ee-naa ya o yo yo naa- ee ee ho- dee hu-tinh yinh ts'eegho- yo seeghu-
Mother In the cold Even in cold weather she
yo no-yi- da-atl-tonee yee dooghoo- yoo naa-a hee ba- gho-o bakk'aay
fed him from her breast He was trying to reach
yee no-lo- yo- ti-gi- ya-ayh ee hu yee naa-a hee naa-a- hee naa- ee o naa-
for it but she was gone Mother Mother
end
ee naa- ee o naa- ee ho naa- a naa-a nee-e naa-a- nee yoo haa ya ee-na
Mother Mother Mother
ya o yo yo naa- ee ee ho- dee hu-ti- yinh ts'eegho- yo yukku- yo ho no-
She used to go out in cold weather to pick berries
o dzo-dee- gha-a lee yo- ee do-ghoo- yoo naa-a- hee ba- kk'aa -a deegho-
She found she was near where a bear was making its den
from the sign
to the end
yo kk'aak'a- hoo hoo-da ko-oyh t'aa-see- yee
Men went out and killed the bear

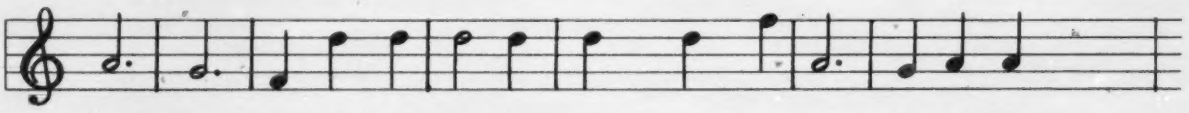
23

ATHABASKAN INDIAN DANCE SONG FROM KOYUKUK

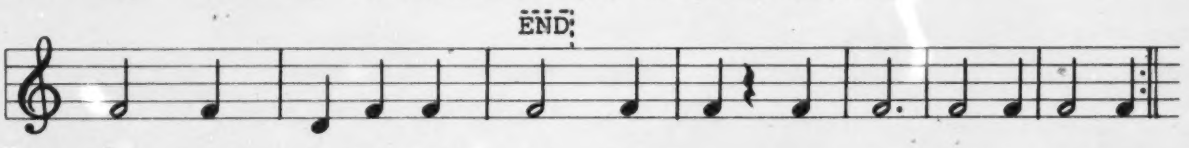
Sung by Madeline Solomon, fall, 1977
Song-class: k'idzis k'ileek (dance song)
M.M. ♩=184 Transposition: min 6th up



Ho-dee dee- go k'i- tsee-ya neeł- ts'i baa- to-yi- naa-nee-
That knife with an iron handle



lo- yee bu-ghu a- do-daa- ghas-niyh ee-hoo do-bi-duh-
I tried to buy it from him, but without success



nee hee' do-bi-duh- nee hee' o soo- gha ha ha ha he
Let him go, let him go (die) O older brother

The originator of the song about the man who did not want to sell his knife composed the song before 1867. The song was sung before the purchase of Alaska from Russia.

The Native people traded skins to the Russians for most of the items they wanted. The way in which the trade was completed was as follows:

> When someone wanted to get a gun, the owner of the gun would stand the gun down on its end. The buyer would pile skins from the bottom of the gun to its top. If the buyer did not have enough skins, he would borrow from his friends until he had enough to reach the top of the gun barrel. Only then would the gun be his.

It is not the custom of song makers to say "they don't care" about a person who passed away. In this song, however, the composer deliberately expressed in words his feelings about the deceased who refused to sell him his knife. Perhaps it is because of this unusual expression that the song's popularity lingered on even though no one remembered who composed it and for whom it was made. Everyone sang this song in Koyukuk at anytime of the year.

25

ATHABASKAN INDIAN DANCE SONG FROM TANANA

In 1928, Jessie Folger of Tanana composed a song for one of the women in Tanana. She spoke of how this lady raised children other than her own. She wondered where they were, and what they were going to do to show their appreciation for this woman who had done so much for them. The composer felt very sad that her friend had passed away without saying any parting words of kindness to her.

Sung by Madeline Solomon in Koyukuk, fall, 1977.
Song-class: "happy song (in Tanana)
M.M. ♩ =192 Transposition: maj 7th up

O ho ho' heeya ha hee hee hee' hee hee hee o ho ho' heeya ha hee' hee hee hee
oho' hee yoo' hee oho' hee yoo' hee oho' ho ho ho' ho hee'heehee ho ee-
no ee- naa- a ha ha ha bitsoo-hoo yo o kk'aa- tugh yi- neeɬ-daakk
Oh dear mother
Where are the ones she raised
na ha ha do-to-t'aa- a aɬ do-to-o- t'aaɬ o ho ho hee ha o ho' ho oo'
What will they do?
ee o ho'oo ho ho'oo ho ho' o ho hee a- no ee- naa- a- a ha ha kk'udaa ha
Oh dear mother
Now she
ɬo "six bits" si- ts'i no- do- di- loo-di- tee- o- la- a hu lo- o-
did not say her last kind words to me
ho o ho ho' heeyaa ha ha'ee hee' ee o ho' o ho ha a ho' ho oo' ee o
ho' o ho ho' o ho ho' o ho hee a- no ee- na
Mother

27

This song about an older brother was composed by Louie Pilot of Kokrines in 1928. He lamented the loss of an older brother who lived a very long life. His brother lived to be over one hundred years old, and he was respected by everyone. He had great knowledge of the animals and especially the brown bear.

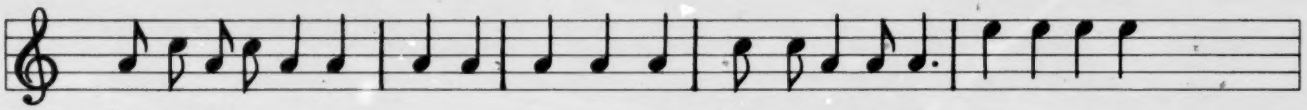
Louie Pilot lived to be over ninety. He composed many songs that are still being sung in the potlatches today. One of these songs is about one of his experiences just prior to his death. It is said that he tried to get to Kokrines for Christmas but he couldn't because he was stuck up on the mountains some place. So he made a song to say "That's alright. (Now that I am stuck here), next Christmas I'll be there. I'll make it."

Unfortunately, Louie didn't make it when Christmas came around the following year. He passed away around 1935.

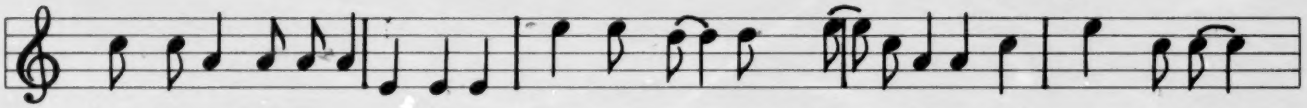
Sung by Madeline Solomon, fall, 1977.
Song-class: k'idzis k'ileek (dance song)
M.M. ♩ =118 Transposition: min 6th up

ATHABASKAN INDIAN DANCE SONG FROM KOYUKUK

Sooghaɬa doghu t'a-aa-aa-a yee heeho- o soo- gha-a ee ee a yaa hee ho
My older brother, we looked up to him for that

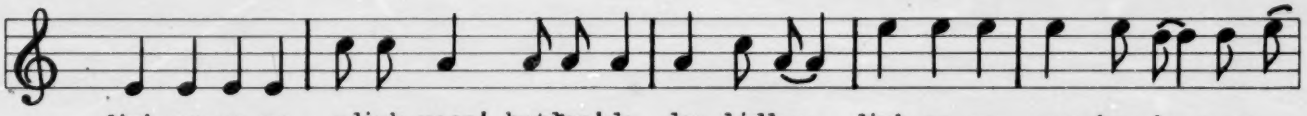


soogha-a-a ee hee soogha ha ha' ha' sooghaɬo doghu- ut-aa-aa-aa
My older brother, we looked up to him for that

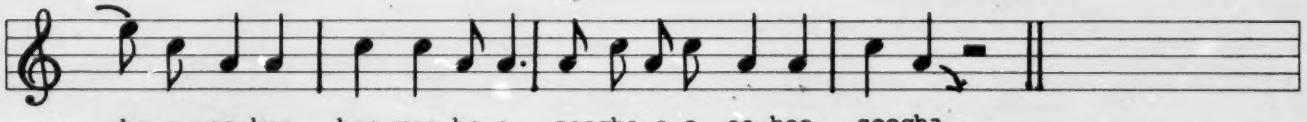


sooghaɬo doghu-u a ha ha yaa hee ho soo gha-a a ha-haa yee hee ho
My older brother

soogha-a-a a ha soogha ee hee hana adinh yaan' hutɬee'do daa lidlaa
My older brother He lived longer than the rest of the people

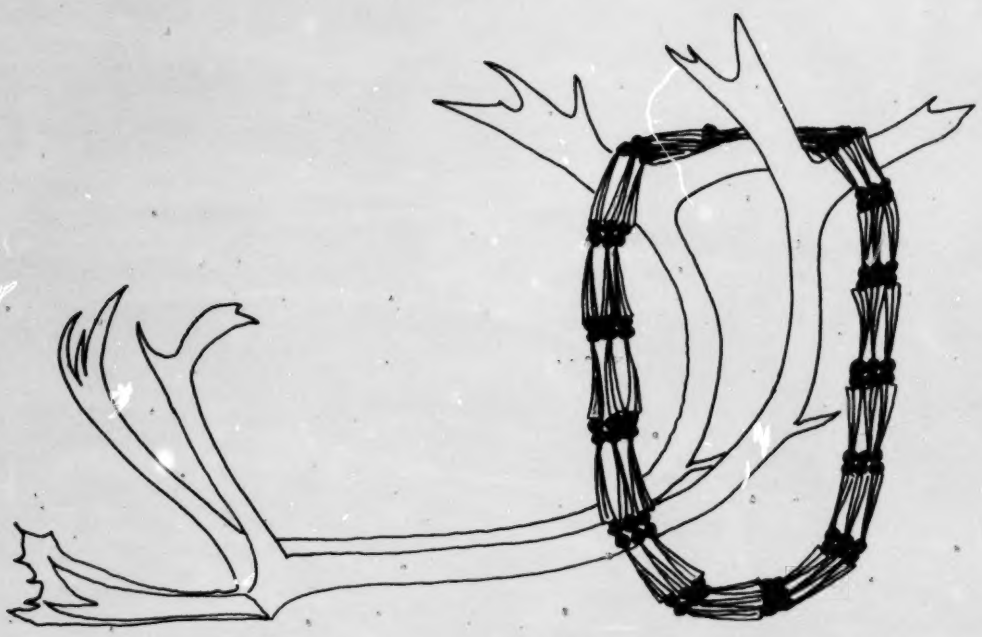


dinh ee ee ee adinh yaan' hutɬee'do daa lidlaa dinh ee ee yee hee ho soo-



gha-a ee hee hee yee he-e soogha-a-a ee-hee soogha

29



This song about three women of Koyukuk was composed by Louie Pilot in 1923. The three women were Mrs. Tom Dayton, Mrs. Old Toby, and Mrs. Old Man Koyukuk. They all died of pneumonia within one week.

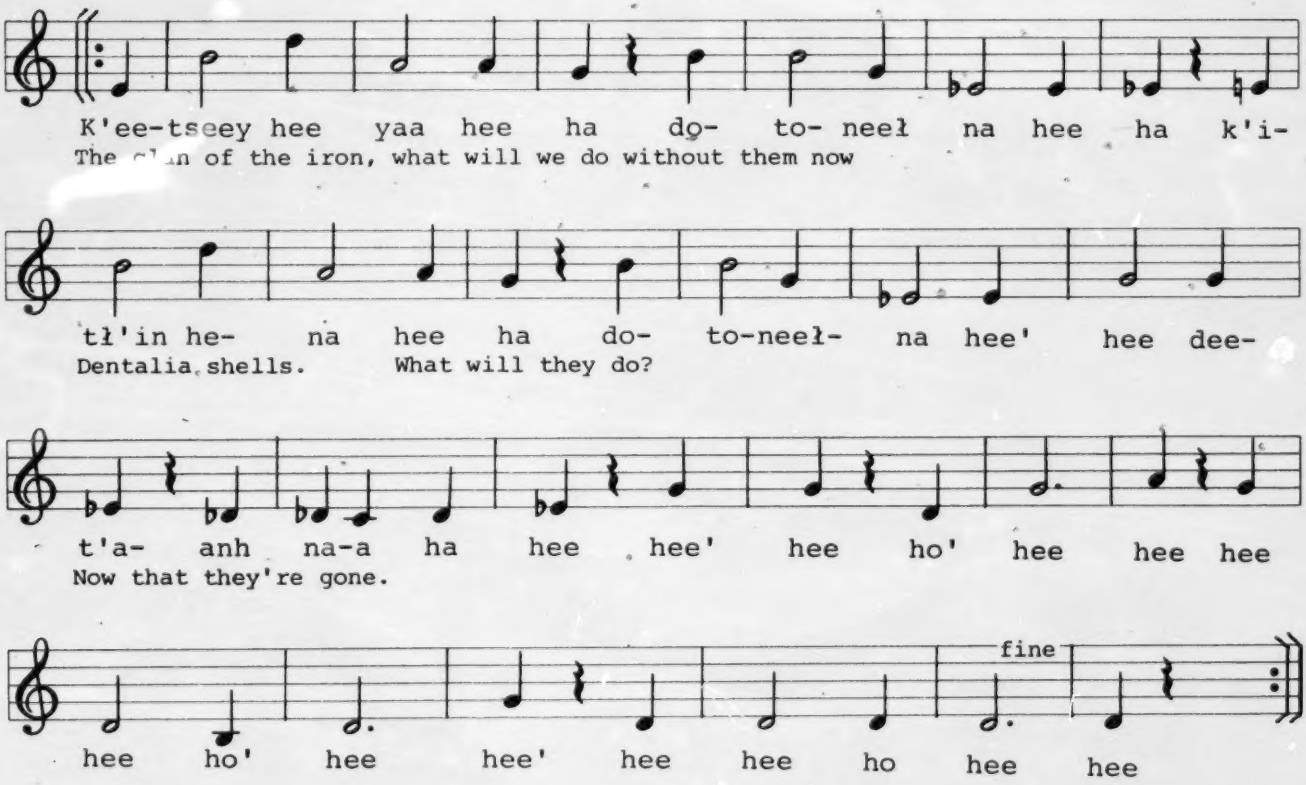
Louie spoke of the women as belonging to the iron clan. Perhaps he meant that they belonged to a very strong clan since clans were named after animals and not metals.

Long ago, there were three main clans for the Koyukon people. These were the caribou, bear, and fish. The caribou clan in Indian is bitzeeyh not'anaa. The bear clan is noltseenh. The fish clan is toneetsighaltseel. Most of the toneetsighaltseel are not living today, and most of the old people who knew about clan membership have passed away. The signifigance of the clans have passed away with them. No longer do the Koyukon people compete in speech making which made it mandatory that contestants be from different clans.

Louie's song referred to clan membership and to likening the women to dentalia shells. He meant that the ladies were priceless, and he wondered why they had to die.

ATHABASKAN INDIAN DANCE SONG FROM KOKRINES

Sung by Madeline Solomon, fall, 1977.
Song-class: k'idzis k'ileek (dance song)
M.M. ♩=185 Transposition: maj 3rd up


K'ee-tseey hee yaa hee ha do- to- neeł na hee ha k'i-
The clan of the iron, what will we do without them now
tł'in he- na hee ha do- to-neeł- na hee' hee dee-
Dentalia shells. What will they do?
t'a- anh na-a ha hee hee' hee ho' hee hee hee
Now that they're gone.
fine
hee ho' hee hee' hee hee ho hee hee

31

Emily Esmailka composed this song for her son. She lived in Nulato until her death in 1947. This song was made about 1945.

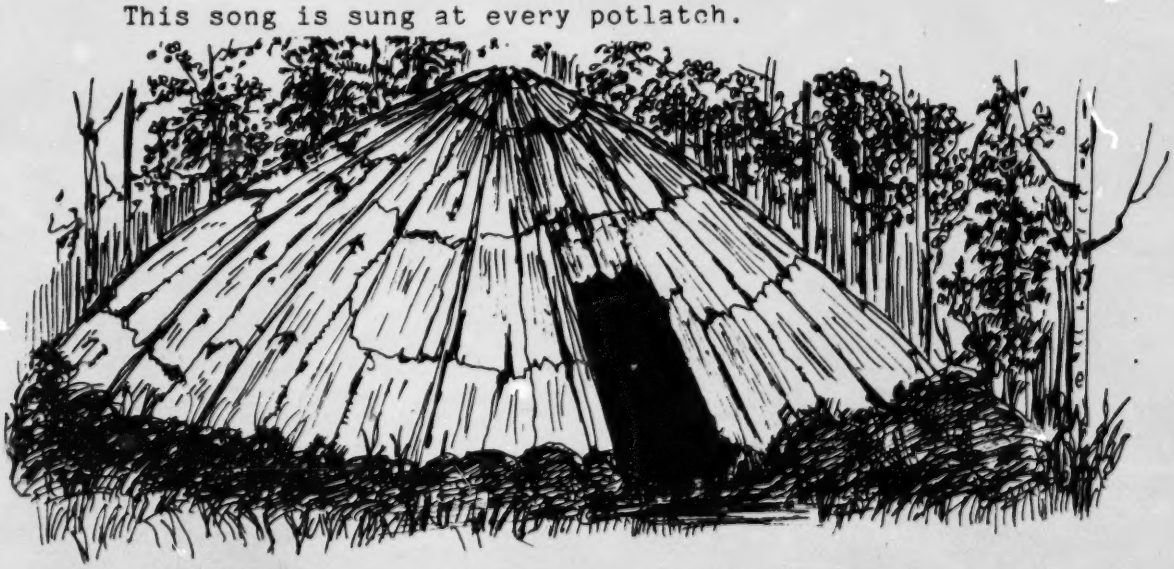
Emily's song tells of how she took her son to the doctors but they were unable to cure him. "What a pity," she said. It was a pity indeed in those days because tuberculosis was rampant in the Native villages. It killed many people. Of course the disease was called "consumption" at that time. So when later people talked about T.B., most of the people in the villages didn't know what that disease was.

When a person got T.B. in those days, there was no medication. Isolation was attempted mostly in the summer. A tent would be built and the sick person moved to it. He was encouraged to get lots of sunshine and fresh air. He had his own eating utensils. The little children were discouraged from visiting the sick person. Only the older sick people were isolated in this manner.

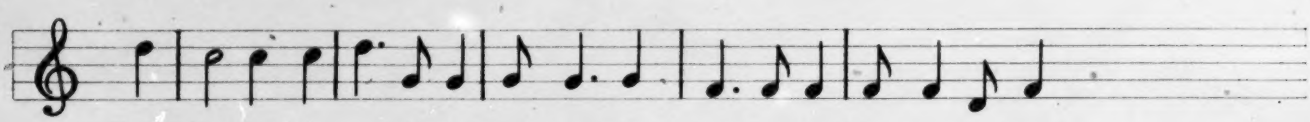
The Native people had their own medicine people. They used to go to these medicine people and offer them gifts to affect cures. Sometimes the medicine men advised the seekers of the cures to take the afflicted to the hospital because they couldn't cure them.

Most of the Native cures consisted mainly of restricted diets. Sometimes the Native doctors would advise against manual labor or the use of sharp instruments.

This song is sung at every potlatch.



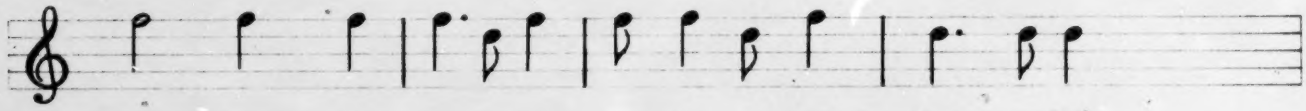
Sung by Madeline Solomon, fall, 1977.
Song class: k'idzis k'ileek (dance song)
M.M. ♩ = 132 Transposition: maj 6th up



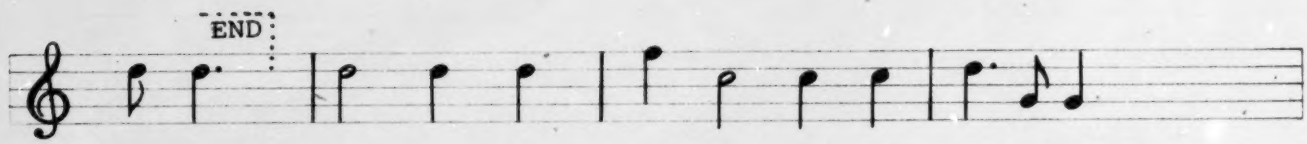
koo-la-a hee o o-ho hee-ya hee' hee o-ho hee-ya o hee'
What a pity. Too bad.

hee o-yo hee- ya ha ha ha koo-la hee hee
What a pity.

yoo-naa-na hu-t'aa na bi-yił a-do-tsah dee naa li-gi yo koo-
Outside person (a doctor) I cried to him in vain about my son.



nee hee hee o o-ho hee-ya o hee' hee o-ho

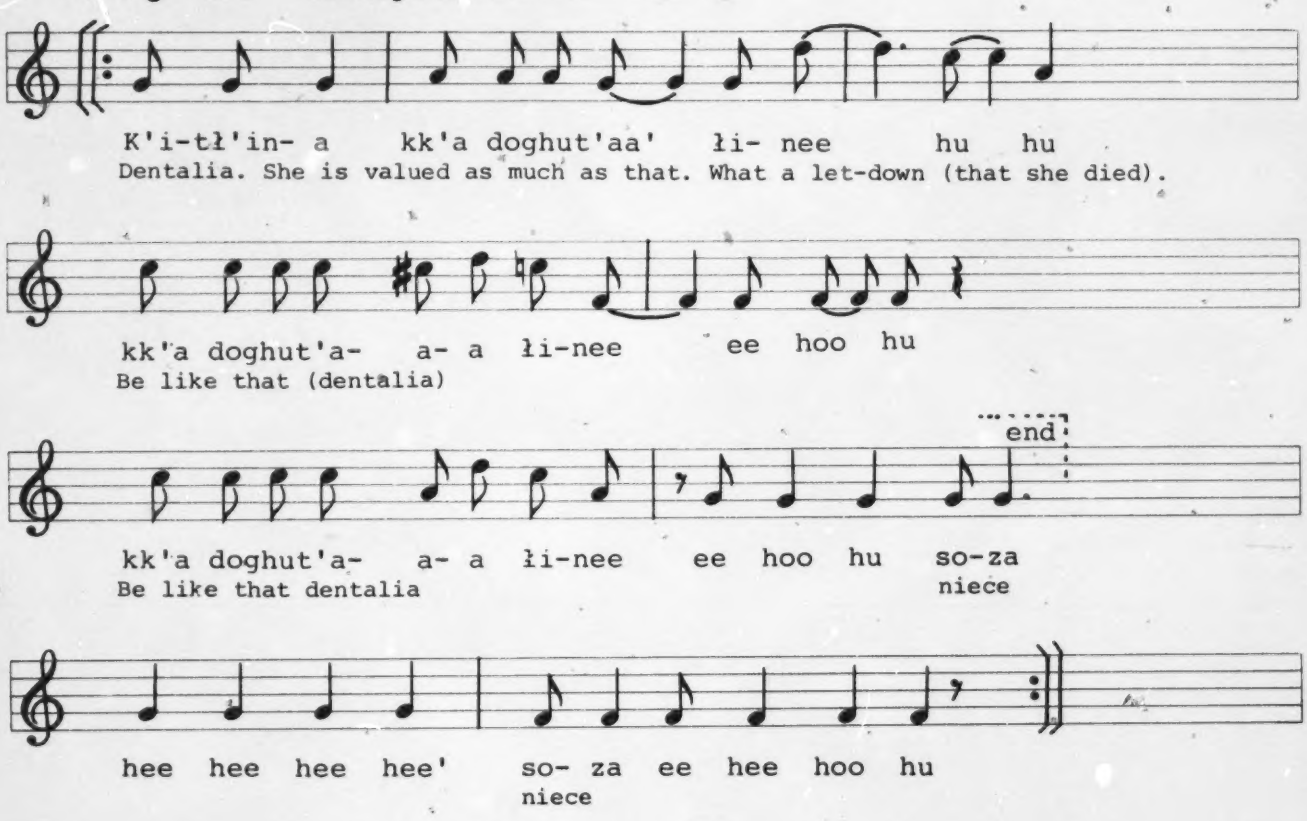


hee-ya hee hee hee' choo-la ha hee o o-ho

hee ya hee' hee o ho hee ya o hee hee o ho hee-ya hee hee

ATHABASKAN INDIAN DANCE SONG FROM NULATO

Sung by Madeline Solomon, fall, 1977
Song-class: k'idzis k'ileek (dance song)
M.M. ♩ =133 Transposition: dim 5th up


K'i-tł'in- a kk'a doghut'aa' łi- nee hu hu
Dentalia. She is valued as much as that. What a let-down (that she died).
kk'a doghut'a- a- a łi-nee ee hoo hu
Be like that (dentalia)
end
kk'a doghut'a- a- a łi-nee ee hoo hu so-za
Be like that dentalia
niece
hee hee hee hee' so- za ee hee hoo hu
niece

No one knows the name of the man who composed this song but he was from Nulato and the song is about his niece. It is over one hundred years old. When the dancers sing this song, they usually sing it over and over again almost continuously for an hour or more.

The song speaks of a woman who was as precious as the highly valued dentalia. Everyone felt very badly when she died. The song is sung at every potlatch.

35

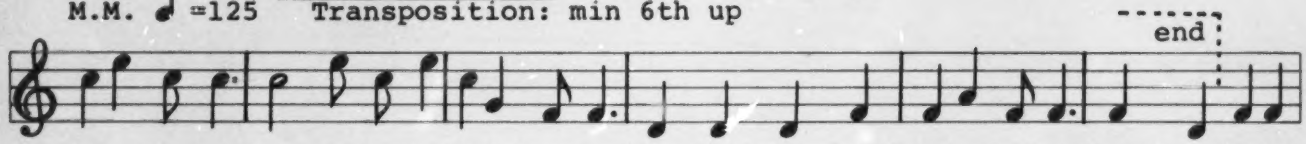
Chief Henry, who passed away in 1976, composed a song for George Attla Sr. in 1968. Both men lived in Huslia.

George Attla was a very successful fur trapper. He trapped wolverine, wolf, mink, marten and other animals. In the summer, he would move down with his family to the Yukon River. They stayed there and fished for salmon and dogfish. After fishing, he got all his winter supplies and moved up to his hunting cabin at Dolby River. His Christmas holidays were spent in Huslia. Towards the end of George's life, he lost his eye sight.

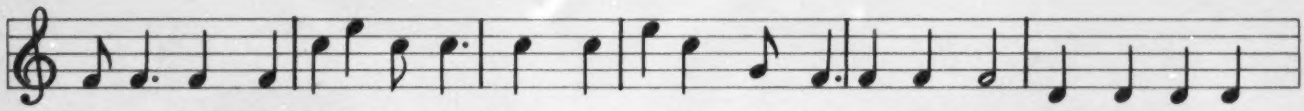
This song about the father of one of Alaska's top dog mushers, George Attla Jr., speaks of his successful life as a hunter. It also speaks of how his friends and relatives miss hearing his voice among them.

ATHABASKAN INDIAN dzaataah SONG FROM HUSLIA

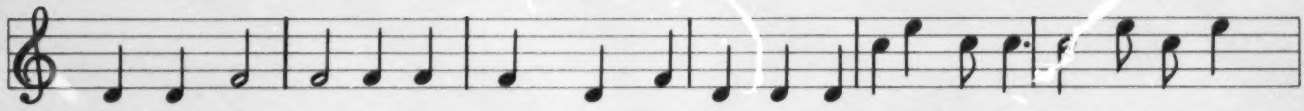
Sung by Madeline Solomon, fall, 1977.
Song-class: dzaataah k'ileek ("body sway" song)
M.M. ♩ =125 Transposition: min 6th up



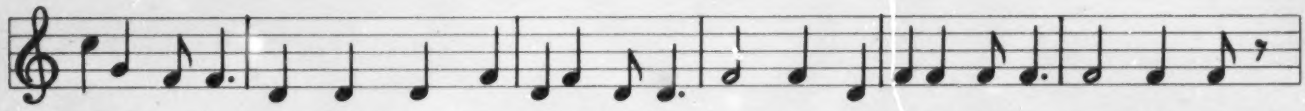
Oho'heeya hee hu-u-ha oho heeya hee hee hee hee' oho heeya hee' ha oho



heeya hee hee oho heeya hee hee onee kk'a-a ba-gho-li- yaa ha ha ha'
Might as well make a merry farewell for his (deceased) good hunting life



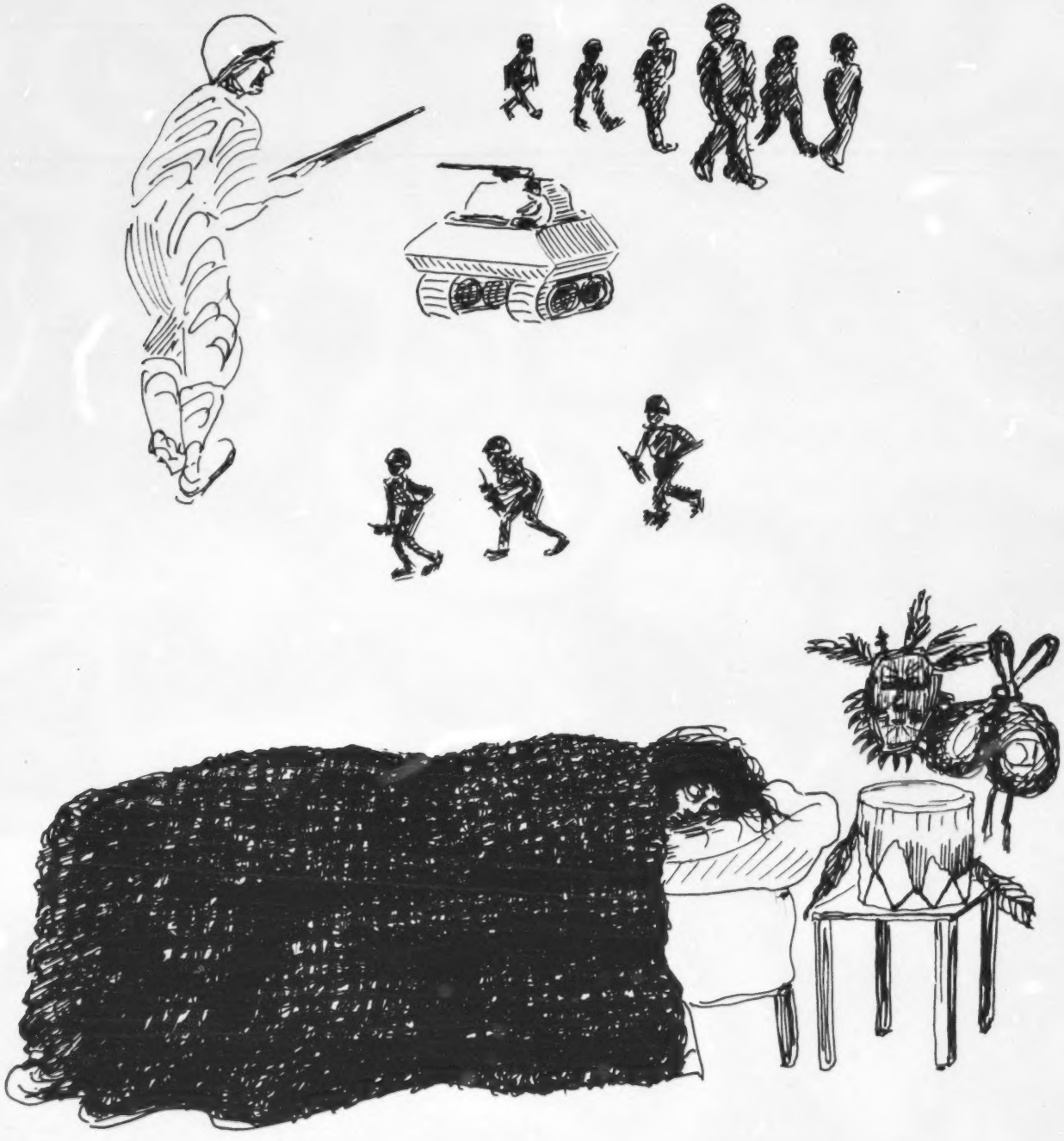
kk'a no-soo- oł yi-to- teeh ghee-la hee ha ha oho heeya hee hu-u ha



oho heeya hee hee hee hee oho heeya hee hee ha oho heeya hee hee ha

si-ki-tł'a hee hee needaadi-inh bakka-naa- ga ha he' kk'a diyeet aa-
My younger brother (cousin)..when will we hear words like his again?

yee no-ts'oo-ti-lo-litł'eeł di-i- inh



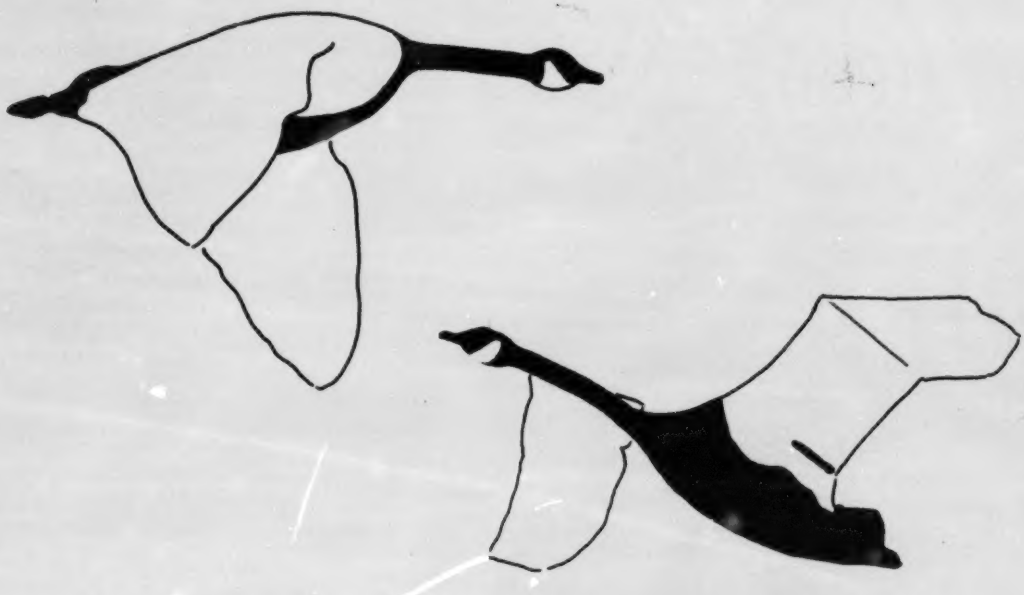
ATHABASKAN INDIAN DANCE SONG FROM TANANA

Sung by Madeline Solomon, fall, 1977
Song-class (in Tanana): "happy" song
M.M. ♩ =202 Transposition: min 6th up

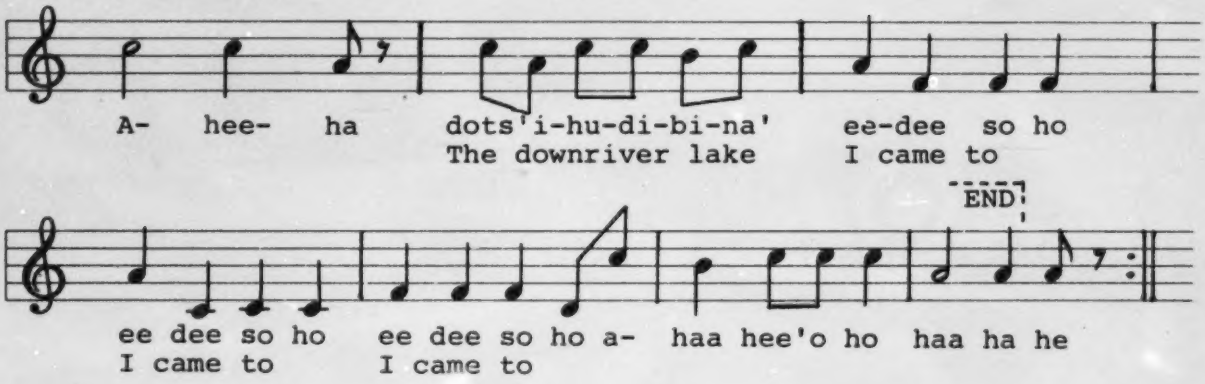
Yoo-naa-ha- nee hee yoo-naa-ha- nee jo lo mee- na hee yagga-a
Way outside (overseas) way outside Let them say that the Germans
haał nee- yo ha-yił doo- nee' o- hee yo hee o- hee yo
were beaten
1
hee hee hee' ee yo hee hee'ee yo hee o hee yo hee o
hee yo hee hee hee' ee yo hee
2
hee hee hee' ee yo hee

This song was composed by a great medicine man in Tanana. It is said that the medicine man woke up from his sleep singing this song. It tells of the Germans being beaten, and how happy the medicine man was to hear of this. He sang this song before the Germans were beaten and World War I ended in 1918.

Even though the song was made in 1917, it is still very popular today. Many people sing and dance to it at the pot-latches.



Sung by Madeline Solomon, fall, 1977
Song-class k'idzis k'ileek (dance song)
M.M. ♩=123 Transposition up min 6th


A- hee- ha dots'i-hu-di-bi-na' ee-dee so ho
The downriver lake I came to
END
ee dee so ho ee dee so ho a- haa hee'o ho haa ha he
I came to I came to

This song was composed by two boys who always hunted together a long time ago. It is said that these boys gave each other an Indian name. One of them was called Biyeedaadaah. The other was Kk'obaayoɬt'aaɬ. The meaning of the name Biyeedaadaah is that "every time he calls, the geese come down to him." The name Kk'obaayoɬtaaɬ means "he never misses a shot."

These two friends were very close. One would always call the geese to come to him while the other shoot them down. One day when they were out hunting up the Tanana river, they were very surprised to come to a big lake. They thought that big lakes were only found down river. The occasion so impressed them that they made a song about it.

In this song, the boys thought they found a big lake down river. Actually, they found the big lake upriver. The song is still sung at the potlatches today.

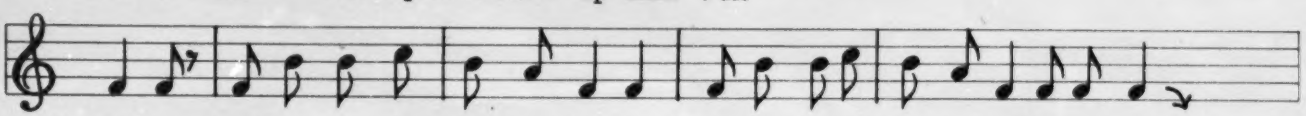
Austin Joe, of Koyukuk, composed a song for Andrew Pilot, also of Koyukuk. Andrew was a great medicine man. He was also a speech maker who often won the speech contests. At hunting, Andrew was extremely lucky.

The song speaks of Andrew's luck in trapping. He was very successful. He was always depended on by others for things they needed. He was generous and he shared his gains with all the people. The people missed him and recalled how they expected the lucky conditions to prevail when he was living. They felt that they were lucky whenever Andrew was with them.

Andrew Pilot was a man with many talents. Not only was he the successful hunter, the great speech maker, but he was also a composer of songs.

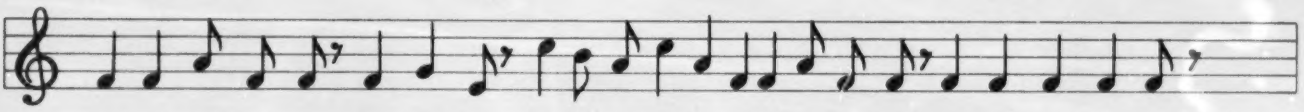
Austin Joe was a very hard working man. In addition to composing songs, he did other things. He did not believe in taking a dogteam out for hunting. He would pack all his gear himself and stay out three or four days without using a tent. He fished and put up fish in the summer even though he was very successful with trapping in winter. He passed away about the late fifties but his songs have lived on.

Sung by Madeline Solomon, fall, 1977.
Song-class: k'idzis k'ileek (dance song)
M.M. ♩ =110 Transposition: up min 6th

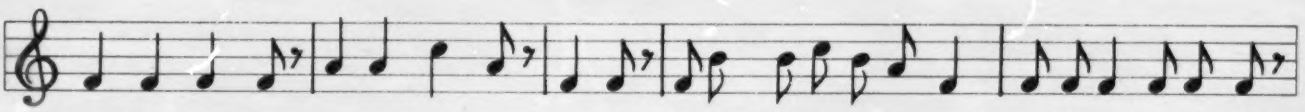


Ee-hee kk'udaa k'itłin' k'a kkaala hee' kk'udaa oodlo k'akkaala dinaa yił
Good luck with the meat-giving animals

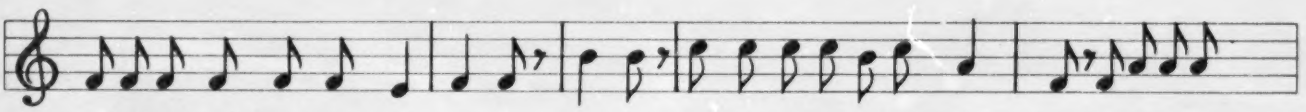
hanok'akkał toteeh dinh doho gheet'aa' hoo hoo soogha ee ha ha hee hee hee ha
Good luck with the fur-bearing animals My older brother



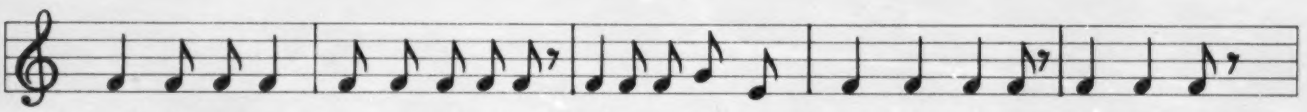
a-haa yee ho hee ho hee hee ha ha-a ha ha aha yeeho hee ho hee hee soogha
We always had the luck anyway



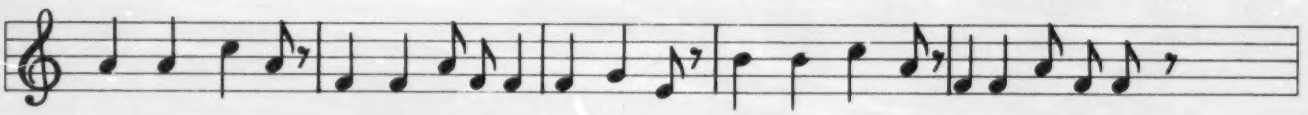
hee hee hee hee ee hee hee hee ee hee hodee deego yoonots'inh gholeeya dinaa yił
Remember how he shared his goods?



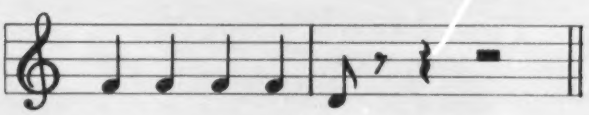
hanok'akkaał li-tonh do- na hee hee hee a-t'eenoghalinoł ts'in hee biniyidi-
Good fortune surrounded him everywhere he went. He shared it.



daah hu hałdoo' yi soonaaneeya' dohudeegheełaan' hoo hoo soogha hee hee hee
He had a good old time, sharing it My older brother



hee hee hee hee hee hee yuhohee ho hee hee haa hee hee hee o-ho yeehohee



ATHABASKAN INDIAN DANCE SONG FROM KOYUKUK

ho hee hee soo-gha
My older brother

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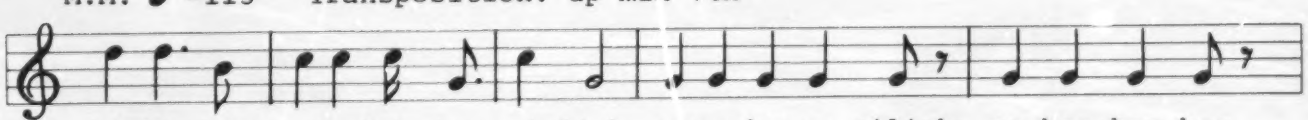
John Dayton composed a song for James Demoski who was his best friend. They went to school together at Holy Cross. John is from Koyukuk and James is from Nulato.

James drowned in the Yukon about 1923. He was depended upon by the older Native people as an interpreter. He interpreted for the old people whenever they held meetings with outsiders. He interpreted for them when they went to see the doctor, or to buy from the store.

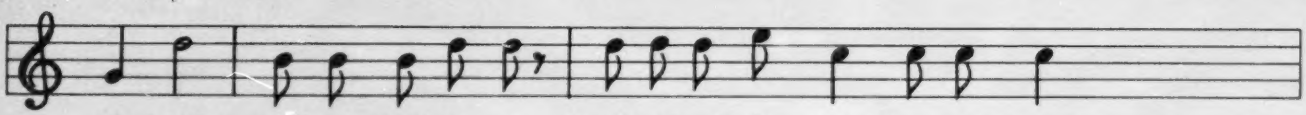
The people missed him. His body was never found and the song speaks of how he would have carried on the name of the wealthy people, the Stickmans of Nulato, he married into. The people wondered where he disappeared to.

John Dayton was a very hard working man. He trapped in the same way as Austin Joe. He did not take the dogs out nor did he use a tent. He composed many songs and he also was an interpreter for the people of Koyukuk.

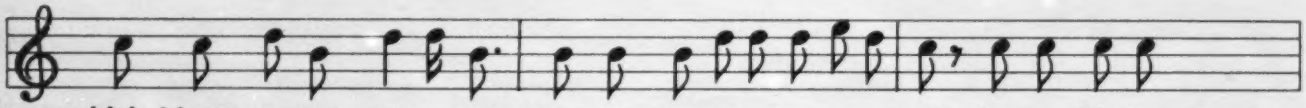
Sung by Madeline Solomon, fall, 1977.
Song-class: k'idzis k'ileek (dance song)
M.M. ♩ =113 Transposition: up min 7th



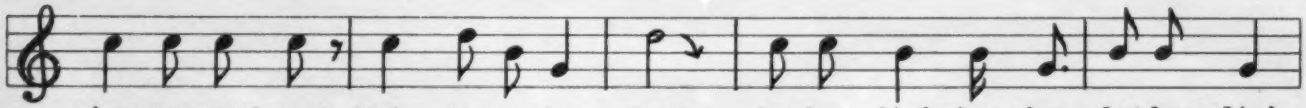
44



si-linh hodee gholee ya teeyadeełt'aa yee huts'i haał
Remember the great things he shared with us



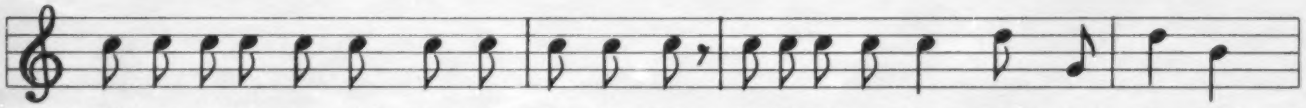
kk'akkaał ateeh di-i-inh baahaa hadohudeetoyo-anh deego dinaa
He would have made a name for the place taken



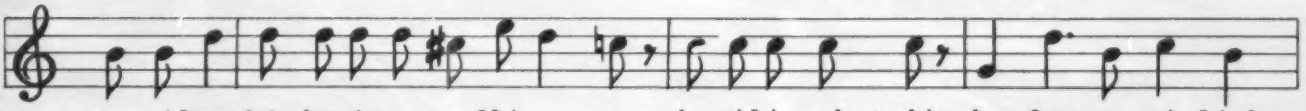
ghu noyeetłnonh kk'a diyee-lo- ghanh dotłee dinh hee hee dotłee dinh
from us that he (the water) took from us This (water down the bank) down here

hee si-linh na hee hee hee si-li-inh yoza hee hee si-li-inh
My dear brother-in-law My dear brother-

yoza hee si-linha na hee hee hee si-li-inh hodee bitseeyayoo
in-law His grandfathers,



bilaa-ayoo nots'i kkanaak ats'eedo- hudilinaaghee dinh hu- ghu-unh
his uncles that down there we depended on him



yooniłaa bit'oyineezaadliyo yee hayili-anh ts'in ho-dee-ee si-linh
to interpret a language we did not understand Now where is he, my dear brother-

noza si-linh si-linh
in-law?

ATHABASKAN INDIAN DANCE SONG FROM KOYUKUK

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